

Hillandale

News

No 199 August 1994



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Tuesday 13 September 1994



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Hillandale News

The Official Journal of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society

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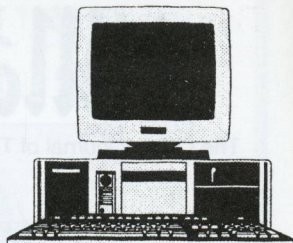
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Front cover illustration: Miss Ruth Vincent. See Peter Cliffe's article on page 89

EDITOR'S DESK



Technical Matters

Some readers have asked for more articles on technical subjects. I think there is a case for publishing some articles of a more technical nature and commencing with this issue we shall be starting an occasional series under the title *Technical Jottings*. This will continue as long as the demand exists and I would welcome contributions from any member who feels motivated to write something of a technical nature.

August Meeting

These days we do not seem to have many programmes at our London Meetings where cylinders and phonographs are used. For the August meeting we are rectifying this situation when Dominic Combe is to bring his Edison Triumph phonograph along with some cylinders to give us some *Ragtime Memories*. I hope there will be a large turnout to support Dominic.

September Meeting

George Glastris is well known for his love of hot music and jazz. He is to share that love with us in the September Meeting when he will be letting us hear some of his favourites from cylinders and discs (many of them from the Edison stable) in a programme entitled *St. Louis Blues*. All members are welcome to come along and let their hair down!

October Hillandale News

The next issue will be our 200th issue. To celebrate this landmark we will publish some articles specially written for the occasion including some words from our Chairman, Dr Peter Martland. The Society can be proud of its achievements since the first *Hillandale News* was published thirty-four years ago; with a present membership of over 700 the Society is well placed to enter the twenty-first century.

Please note that material intended for inclusion in *Hillandale News* must reach the Editor not later than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue**.

Hence the deadline for the **October** issue will be **15th August 1994**.

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THE BRITISH RECORD INDUSTRY DURING THE REIGN OF KING EDWARD VII: 1901 - 1910

by Frank Andrews

Part 2

1902

1902 began in the same manner as 1901 ended, with no fundamental patents restricting the manufacture and sale of gramophones and disc records.

However the position with phonograph patents was quite different. During 1902 the taper mandrel and taper bore patents expired. One of the first important phonograph companies to offer competition to what had been Edison Bell's British monopoly was Pathé Frères of Paris. Through its Paris agency Soury et Cie, the company opened in May 1902 at Dean Street, London W. as **Pathé Frères, London Ltd.** Pathé offered three sizes of cylinder during the next four years, the Standard, the Salon and the Celeste. They drew on a very large international catalogue built up during eight years of business in France. Some recordings of British artists and repertoire had already been made before operations commenced in London.

In Liverpool, **The International Phonograph and Indestructible Record Co. Ltd.** was founded in April 1902. The great majority of its celluloid cylinder records were pirated dubbings from other maker's recordings, although one artist later claimed he made original recordings for the firm.

Waterfield, Clifford and Co. Ltd., began advertising their New Century Phonographs and cylinders again. In September, their cheapest machine sold for only 9s. 6d. each with the records at 1s. 6d., reduced the following month to 1s. 3d.

During the interim one of the New Century directors had set up the **Empire Phonograph Company** in Friday Street, Cheap-side E.C. This transient firm appears to have advertised in August and September 1902. They had an Empire Phonograph at 17s. and Empire Records at 1s. 6d. each, claiming them to be the "Loudest and Best"; agents were sought for the business.

Another indestructible record, made of celluloid, was put on sale by **Edison Bell.** These were connected with the **Lambert Company of Chicago.** They sold for 2s. 0d. each, with 2,000 selections to choose from, mostly of Edison Bell's own recordings. The earliest advertisements I have come across date from November 1902.

In 1902 The National Phonograph Co., a new company, was registered to Young and Sinclair. Young was, between 1888 and 1890, manager of The Phonograph Company in London, before that company became part of the Edison United Phonograph Co. Young and Sinclair claimed that they had formed their **National Phonograph Co. Ltd.** to protect the name for the American Edison business until that company felt it opportune to open up a British branch. They, allegedly, wrote to the Edison European manager in Antwerp telling him of their proposal, which they would carry into effect if no objection was received. On the other hand, there is no other evidence that they were up to something underhand in registering that name, which was similar to that of the Edison business in America.

As evidence of how the industry and trade had expanded in the first ten months of 1902, there were twenty-three businesses operating in the London area alone, either as manufacturers, agents or factors, and there were others in other parts of the country.

Two label names changed

At the start of the 1902-1903 selling season, The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. put black and gold paper labels onto its 7" diameter discs. This removed the name E. Berliner's Gramophone, changing it to simply Gramophone Record. In the 10" size, the name of Gramophone Concert Record remained unchanged. A major innovation in the U.K. disc market, in September, was the introduction of the celebrity catalogue of artistes, whose discs were given red and gold labels and were priced at 10s., twice the price of the black labelled discs.

The other label change was made by the Columbia Phonograph Co. General. They renamed their 7" and 10" Climax discs Columbia Record with labels with a black background and silver print. [7" Gramophone Record 370 of the Coldstream Guards conducted by Mackenzie Rogan performing a *Medley of Coster Songs* and Columbia Record (formerly a Climax) 679 of a band performing Suppé's *Morning, Noon and Night* were played at Neasden.]

At the close of 1902 The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. had competition for its two sizes of discs from the International Zonophone Company's three sizes, sold through a London agent, and from two sizes of Columbia disc records, manufactured in America and sold through the European Headquarters of Columbia Phonograph Co. General. No disc records were being made in Britain, except for the experimental work at the Crystalate Manufacturing Co. Ltd.'s works at Golden Green, Hadlow, near Tonbridge. This took the form of experiments with pressing using different formulae of materials. A tale told in the 'twenties by a

long-associated member of the company claimed that small brown coloured 5" discs, selling for 2s. 6d. each had been produced about this time with a work force of only ten people. However, no corroboration has ever been found, either in documentary form or in an example of any of the discs.

In the cylinder field, by avoiding a few mechanical patented facets of the phonograph manufacturing, the industry was then wide open to any who wished to participate. As soon as the Edison Bell wax and Lambert type of cylinders were compelled to share the market place with the records of the International Phonograph and Indestructible record Co., the Pioneer Record Co., the New Century Record Co., Columbia and the large London Branch of Pathé Frères, the problems of piratical duplicating was brought to the fore. In addition some phonographs and certain makes of records were imported from Germany.

1903 - The Phonograph market expands - and the first failures

With Edison Bell's last significant patent expired November 1902, the way was open for all kinds of entrepreneurs to seek a profit in the new talking machine industry.

In 1903, Edison Bell, knowing it would probably lose its supplies of the various models of Edison machines as soon as the American company established itself in Britain, was in the process of building its new Edisonia Works at Camberwell, London S.E. At the beginning of the year it was still operating from its recording rooms in Banner Street, with another at its showrooms in the Charing Cross Road. Cylinder production was carried out on in its Euston Square building, where the Lambert type indestructibles were also in production.

Young and Sinclair's National Phonograph Co. Ltd. had already been acquired by Edison's patent attorney, George Croyden Marks. Until the American company was ready to begin business he was the sole

director. National found premises in the Grays Inn Road, Holborn, where recording commenced in May 1903. By this time Edison Bell's wax production had switched to the new works at Camberwell.

Competition was about to bring prices down and thereby popularise the talking machine. Among the new makes to come on the market in 1903 were the *Star Record* from **The Phono Exchange** in Norwich (later opening in London), *Cambrian Record*, with a repertoire of Welsh music from **William Paddon's** business in Wrexham, Wales and the *Empress Record*, recordings of the Scottish accordionist **Peter Wyper**, made and distributed by himself from his base in Hamilton, Lanarkshire. **J. M. Draper**, of Blackburn, Lancs. began selling *JMD* phonographs and **Mead and Co.** of Liverpool had their *The Leader* phonographs selling from 5s. 6d. to 21s. 6d. along with *The Leader* records at 1s. each or only 10½d. if bought by the dozen. They were available even cheaper if bought in lots of 3 dozen at 29s. Another cheap line was introduced by **Main Wheeleries** in Birmingham, where a German-made *Puck* type machine could be had for as little as 4s. 11d. *Edison Bell*, *Columbia* or *Pathé* standard records were on offer at 11d. each or 10d. if bought by the dozen. The firm's own *A.1 Famous* records were sold for 9d. each reduced to 8d. in dozen lots.

Various concerns advertised *Excelsior Records*, but it is doubtful if they were all from German makers. Names began to be applied to records without the names being registered. Thus it came about that the same name of record would appear in different parts of the country, generally by enterprises who employed the duplicating method of production.

As early as January 1903, **Symonds London Stores** were already making a gift of a *Puck* phonograph to qualifying purchasers of their own *SLS Records*. The next month their *Markona* records were also mentioned.

The same month another make of record, the *Konola* was already on sale as a second-hand buy, advertised by a dealer in Maryport.

New Empire Phonographs, valued at 6s. 9d. were offered as free gifts in a promotion scheme by **Phonograph Importers** of The Green, Richmond, Surrey. Many advertisers had second-hand phonographs for sale among which were such model names and makes as *John Bull*, *Pathé*, *Echophones* (made by the Swiss makers Paillard), *Puck* (sometimes described as Harp phonographs) and *Excelsior* phonographs. John G. Murdoch and Co. Ltd. sold variously named German made machines under their own generic cover name of *Tournaphone*. A new British make of phonograph was *The Axton* from the **Axton Company** of Newington Butts, Southwark, London S.E. This company was establishing itself in London. All the foregoing activity clearly demonstrates how much the phonograph and cylinder record market had expanded during the first full year in which both were practically free of all patent restrictions.

In May 1903, another development which mirrored the growth of the whole talking machine industry took place. This was the publication of the first issue of *The Talking Machine News*, the first periodical to deal with the industry impartially and not tied to any particular company.

It is from the successive issues of that journal, and others of a like nature, which came along later, that one obtains a comprehensive picture of the developments in the ensuing years.

From such pages one is made aware that the cylinder, as an educational tool, had been quickly adopted and was in general use by correspondence courses. The well-known *International Correspondence School* cylinders (made by the Edison Works in America) also became available over here, but it is not generally known that,

as early as the Pathé people in London were making language course records for a Mr Rees, who with his wife, ran the **Modern Language Press**, a business which was later transformed into The Linguaphone Company, the inheritors of which are still in business today.

Through the early pages of *Talking Machine News*, one reads of the first company failures. For example the Empire Phonograph Co. Ltd., having been founded in January 1902, was petitioned into a compulsory winding up in November 1903 by **S. Carter and Co.** of City Road, E.C. (formerly Carter, Fields and Co.), the proprietors of one of the makes of cylinders selling as *Britannia Records*. Soon afterwards The New Century Phonograph Co. went out of business, its last advertisements appearing in *The Talking Machine News* in December 1903.

The cylinder year ended with the most important make of record being introduced to the British buyer: the *Edison Gold Moulded* cylinder. This standard 2-minute cylinder was released by the **National Phonograph Co. Ltd.** in Clerkenwell Road, London E.C. using British and American recordings.

1903 - Developments in the disc industry

In 1903 circumstantial evidence indicating that the Crystalate works had in 1902 given assistance to the International Zonophone Company, either by supplying material or undertaking a certain amount of pressing work, or both. It is known that the German company had difficulty in fulfilling orders from its agents and its U.K. principal agent, Nicole Frères, Ltd. was one of those whose orders were only being partially filled. As with other disc companies, viz. The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. and Columbia Phonograph Co. General, International Zonophone really had only one factory to carry out its pressing work, all three companies operating world-wide.

Suggestions were made to Nicole Frères Ltd. by persons connected with Crystalate and International Zonophone that the London-based company should itself enter the recording industry although it was undecided whether to take up cylinders or discs.

In March 1903, the British Zonophone agency was taken up by Messrs. Ch. and J. Ullman of London, the English branch of the well-established Paris-based musical instrument company. However, in September 1903, Nicole Frères established a divisional account in its business, which it called the New Record Account, in technical association with the Crystalate Manufacturing Co.

Nicole Frères had been founded in the early 1800's by the Nicole brothers in Geneva, Switzerland, and over the years had gained a world-wide reputation for its manufacture of musical boxes. With the passing of time, the business passed into the hands of a German, who opened a branch in London. The whole headquarters were transferred to London at a later date and the business became registered as a private company. By this time there appeared to be no connection with the Nicole family of Geneva, except that the original works had been kept for servicing musical boxes. As a British company, Nicole Frères had begun stocking the Gramophone Company lines, almost as soon as they became available, and it had become by Edison Bell to deal in Edison and other makes of phonographs. As early as March 1901, it began to take up imported American Zonophones, changing to Berlin Zonophones in September 1901. With a production factory already installed, in early 1903, Nicole Frères were preparing to begin selling its own discs, but before that occurred two important developments inaugurated by The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd.

Firstly a 12" disc was introduced to the market. Thus was labelled the Gramophone Monarch Record, with a black label printed

in gold. It sold at 7s. 6d. For internationally celebrity artists, a red and gold label was introduced for both 10" and 12" discs and later the sopranos Melba and Patti were given their own labels as Gramophone Melba Record and Gramophone Patti Record with distinctive coloured labels.

American masters were sent by the Victor Talking Machine Co. to Deutsche Grammophon's pressing factory in Hanover. These masters were pressed for the U.K. catalogues, the 10" retaining their American catalogue numbers (although prefixed G.C.); but after some were found to duplicate existing British numbers, they were soon given an extra VM. As there was no backlog of 12" discs the O prefix used for the 12" Monarchs also took an VM prefix (where the master came from Victor). This complex procedure was not adhered to for long. [Monarch 032030, from a Victor Red Seal recording of Caruso singing *Salut, demeure, chaste et pure* from Gounod's *Faust* was played at Neasden.]

The second important development by The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. was its purchase in Paris on 6th June, of the International Zonophone Company's business, along with the Universal talking Machine Manufacturing Co. of the United States. The effect of purchase was to eliminate one disc competitor from the U.K. market. International Zonophone had brought into being, in the space of twenty five months, a prestigious catalogue of first-rate artists which posed better competition to The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. than the not so well-endowed Columbia Disc records. The first double-sided discs had come from Zonophone in 1902, specifically manufactured for a South American agent, and coloured labels, light blue or orange, had been introduced for the more important artists, and having differentiation in prices. A disc named *Disco Reale*, with a dark blue label, was another product of this company, perhaps produced to circumvent

The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd.'s registration of Zonophone in various countries. Messrs. Ullman's remained the Zonophone agent in London until the end of 1903.

The Nicole Record

Another development of 1903 (with the Nicole record factory ready to come on stream) was the founding, in July, of the **Nicole Record Co. Ltd.** to make recordings and manufacture discs for sale by Nicole Frères Ltd. So, no sooner had the Zonophone competition been eliminated, when *Nicole Records* (at first only in the 7" size) were introduced in August 1903.

The records were brown in colour, non-breakable and priced at 1s. compared to the 7" *Gramophone Records* at 2s. 6d. and both the Columbia and Zonophone equivalents were priced at 2s. Nicole Records were made of a compressed paper or card base, with a proprietary covering manufactured to the invention of officers of the Nicole companies. Bettini, in France, had been involved in the early stages of the preparatory developments, but had withdrawn by the time the records were put on sale. Notwithstanding, Nicole Records were able to instigate a French repertoire, a German repertoire, a few Italian recordings and some Swedish and Norwegian repertoires. They later recorded in India, in competition with The Gramophone and Typewriter's Indian adventures. [7" Nicole Record 2806 with Wilson Hallet singing Leslie Stuart's *I may be crazy but I love you* was played at Neasden]

The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. attempted a number of ploys to put the Nicole Record out of business, even to the extent of contemplating an action against the Nicole companies for using a bird with outstretched wings on its label, which it thought might be in contravention of its own trade mark of a recording angel with outstretched wings. An offer to buy out the

business was eventually rejected because of a multiplicity of contracts to which Nicole had become a party. Nicole Frères also sold its own Nicole machines.

More competition - The International Talking Machine Co.m.b.H.

When The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. purchased the International Zonophone Co. they did not buy F. M. Prescott's stockholding because he, as founder and managing director, would not agree to withdraw from the talking machine industry entirely; and so he remained a shareholder in the company he no longer controlled. In spite of that, in the same July as the Nicole Record Co. Ltd. was founded, he, with assistants, founded the International Talking Machine Co.m.b.H.

in Berlin, procuring a factory in the Weissensee area. With his Zonophone recording experts and many of his Zonophone office staff, he prepared to set himself up in business again, this time fully independent of the Zonophone interests in America whose business, in any case, The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. sold to the Victor Talking Machine Co. in September 1903.

Thus the year 1903 ended: a year in which The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. had begun facing two disc competitors, had reduced the competition to one (Columbia) in June and July, but had the new British Nicole Record arrive in August, as another competing disc. By the year's end the prospect of a third competitor in the form of Prescott's new business was in the offing.

To be continued.

Forthcoming Meetings in London

London Meetings are held at the National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, South Kensington, on the third Thursday evening of the month promptly at **6.45pm** (unless stated otherwise). Members' attention is drawn to the London Meetings Notice on page 100 of issue 188 (October 1992).

August 18th	<i>Ragtime Memories</i> presented by Dominic Combe - a programme with cylinders played on an Edison Triumph.
September 15th	<i>St. Louis Blues</i> - a programme of hot music and jazz on Edison cylinders and discs with George Glastris.
October 20th	George Woolford on <i>1905 and Patti</i>
November 17th	Joe Pengelly will talk about his latest design of cylinder playing machine and let us hear some of the cylinders he has transcribed to tape using this machine
December 15th	<i>Relations</i> - Members night - Bring along your choice on this theme and let others share your enjoyment
January 19th 1995	Geoff Edwards - Full details to be announced
February 16th 1995	Details to be announced.
March 16th 1995	Chris Hamilton - Full details to be announced

RUTH VINCENT

by Peter Cliffe

Save for a knowledgeable few, collectors fortunate enough to pick up a record by Ruth Vincent are likely to dismiss her as just one more ballad singer, pleasant enough to hear but of no great importance. She is not someone about whom much (if anything) is written nowadays, and her records do not turn up very often. But in her day, Ruth Vincent enjoyed immense and thoroughly deserved popularity, and her lengthy stage and operatic career is of great interest.

She was born in Yarmouth on March 22 1877, the elder daughter of Henry Vincent Bunn. Receiving her education locally, she afterwards studied singing in Norwich under a Dr Hill. An attractive girl, with a strong and beautiful soprano voice, she decided to try her luck on the stage, and success came quickly.

Ruth Vincent made her stage debut on March 7 1896, when Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Grand Duke* opened at the Savoy Theatre; apart from her own rôle, she was required to understudy Ilka von Palmay, the leading lady. She played two parts during the run of *His Majesty*, a comic opera with music by Sir Alexander Mackenzie, which began at the Savoy in 1897, and then appeared in a series of revivals at this theatre, including *The Yeomen of the Guard*, *The Grand Duchess* (during Florence St. John's brief indisposition taking on the title rôle), *The Gondoliers*, *The Sorcerer* and *H. M. S. Pinafore*.

In June 1898 she married Lieutenant-Colonel John Fraser of The Royal Horse Guards (The Blues), and the following year retired from the stage. After studying in

Paris with Jacques Bouhy, she made a come-back in April 1903, appearing at the Lyric Theatre in *The Medal and The Maid* with music by Sidney Jones.

This brought her to the attention of George Edwardes, who engaged her for the name rôle in André Messager's *Véronique*, which opened at the Apollo Theatre in May 1904. During 1905-6 she played the same part in the United States. By now thoroughly established, her subsequent rôles included the title one in *Amasis*, a comic opera at the New Theatre (1906), and another lead in Edward German's, *Tom Jones* at the Apollo (1907).

After a tour in *Véronique* during 1909, she turned to grand opera, in February 1910, creating the rôle of Vrenchen in Frederick Delius' *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, put on by the Beecham Opera Company at Covent Garden. Thereafter, she was to be seen in *The Tales of Hoffman*, *Così fan Tutte* and *Don Giovanni*. In April 1911 she made a provincial concert tour; and in December of that year was at the Coliseum playing Gretel in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*.

Determined to broaden her range still further, she ventured successfully into oratorio, making a 1912 debut at the Royal Albert Hall in *The Messiah*. Constantly in demand, she appeared as principal soprano at the Hereford and Gloucester Festivals of 1912 and 1913 respectively. In her later years she sang on all the principal London and provincial concert platforms, becoming a favourite at the London Palladium and Coliseum, just as she had been some time previously at the Queen's Hall.

Beyond this point I have been unable to trace her career; nor do I know when this gifted and versatile singer passed away. Ruth's sister Madge (born 1884), also a talented actress and singer, had a long and active stage career, beginning in the chorus at the Savoy in 1899. She was touring in variety at the start of the 1920s; but, as with Ruth, I can take her career no further.

Exactly when Ruth Vincent first began to record, and for which label, I have been unable to discover, but in 1906 she provided Columbia with seven single-sided discs. These included dell'Acqua's *La Villanelle* (3358 and 30001) and Edmund Falconer and Michael William Balfe's much-loved *Killarney*, first heard in 1861 (30022).

In 1908 she recorded at least six more titles, among them Philip Michael Faraday's *Little Prince*, *Look Up from Amasis*; Edward German's *Which Is My Own True Self?* from *Tom Jones* (6009) and George John Whyte-Melville and F. Paolo Tosti's *Good-bye* of 1881 vintage, with its curiously archaic lyric and magnificent melody (6010).

Ruth Vincent made at least twelve recordings for HMV. Probably all were on single-sided discs initially, although later paired on black-label D or E re-issues. In discussing them, I have been hampered by their extreme rarity; indeed, the only items in my own possession are those on E 27. Lacking matrix numbers, I have been unable to supply recording dates in some instances. Thus, the following listing should not be regarded as in strict chronological sequence.

Just a Little Waiting (Wood) appeared on D472, but I have been unable to discover the single side number. The song was composed by Haydn Wood. *Lilac Time* (Charles Willeby) bears the matrix z7376f and was recorded in 1913 (03350/D117). This song has nothing to do with the show *Lilac Time*, staged at the Lyric Theatre in 1922 with Franz Schubert's melodies. Wil-

leby was among the composers who set Rudyard Kipling's *On the Road to Mandalay*.

A Birthday (Sir F. H. Cowen) was recorded in June 1913, matrix Y16647e (2-3004/E24). Born in Kingston, Jamaica, Sir Frederick Hymen Cowen (1852-1935) studied at Leipzig Conservatory and in Berlin. He conducted at the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition (1888) and at the Queen's Hall inauguration (1893). Of his 300 or so songs, *The Children's Home* is the best known.

I Wonder if my Love is a Dream (Dorothy Forster) appeared on 2-3044 and E25. Born at Carshalton, Dorothy Forster (1884-1950) studied at the Royal Academy of Music and was for a time a concert pianist. She recorded three of her piano compositions for HMV. Her most popular ballad was probably *Rose in the Bud* (1907). She married Leo J. Cary, a music publisher and died in London, apparently in a house fire.

I Heard a Sweet Song (G. Hubi-Newcombe - Dorothy Forster) was published in 1913 and was probably recorded that year by Ruth Vincent (2-3269/E26). An excessively sentimental lyricist, Mrs Hubi-Newcombe collaborated with H. Trotère and M. Piccolomini, among others. *I Bring You Joy* (Haydn Wood) was issued on 2-3289 and E25. This was one of the lesser ballads by a composer whose hits included *Love's Garden of Roses* (1914); *Roses of Picardy* (1916) and *A Brown Bird Singing* (1923).

In My Garden (Samuel Liddle) is mentioned in Harold Simpson's scholarly work *A Century of Ballads*, published by Mills and Boon in 1910. Ruth Vincent's recording was issued in September 1918 (2-3290/E24). Born in Leeds, Liddle studied at the Royal College of Music. So regular were the appearances at Ballad Concerts of Samuel Liddle and F. B. Kiddle, that the heyday of these distinguished piano accompanists became known later as the 'Liddle and Kiddle era'. Liddle's setting of *Abide with Me* was



Ruth Vincent as "Amasis"



Ruth Vincent as Merva Sunningdale and Sylvia Sabianc as Josephine
in "The Medal and the Maid"

recorded by Clara Butt on Gramophone Monarch in 1910 and on Columbia in 1930.

The Waltz Song from Edward German's Tom Jones was recorded by the show's leading lady in November 1914, matrix Ak18542e (2-3069/E27). Almost certainly waxed at the same session was *The Stars That Light My Garden* (Edward Teschemacher - Kennedy Russell), its composer providing Ruth Vincent's piano accompaniment; matrix Ak18546e (2-3049/E26). Edward Teschemacher (1876-1940) was one of the country's foremost lyricists. At the start of the Great War (no doubt because of his surname, although he was a Londoner) he began to call himself Edward Lockton. Also a Londoner, Kennedy Russell (1884-1954), real name Robert Charles Russell, was not only a highly successful song composer (*Young Tom o' Devon* and *Just Because of the Violets*) but a conductor at West End theatres as well as for Cinch recording sessions.

Il Bacio (Luigi Arditi) must have been trilled at one time or another by every soprano in those far-off times when sentimentality ruled

supreme. It translates as *The Kiss*. Ruth Vincent's version was waxed in May 1915, matrix HO1459ac (2-053124/D113). Born in Crescentino, Piedmont, Arditi (1822-1903) studied the violin at Milan Conservatory. He conducted opera at New York's Academy of Music and at Covent Garden. He composed a number of long-forgotten operas himself, and died at Brighton.

The Smile of Spring (Percy E. Fletcher) was recorded in 1916, matrix HO2509af (03566/D117). Fletcher (1879-1932) was born at Derby and became musical director for various West End theatres. He wrote the music for *Cairo* (His Majesty's Theatre, 1921), as well as orchestral music, choral works and songs. Finally *Three Roses* (Philip Arden) appears to have been Ruth Vincent's last recording, made about September 30th 1919, matrix HO5289ae (2-3418 and E27). I know of no other songs by Arden, an obscure composer.

I Heard a Sweet Song (G. Hubert-Newcombe
Dorothy Foster) was published in 1913

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

It is five years since our Honorary Member Cavan O'Connor last bid 'Goodnight' to the Pretty Maiden, hung up his soft hat and country jacket and retired from a lifetime of singing to audiences all over the world. All of us in the Society send our congratulations to our respected Victorian member on reaching his 95th Birthday on July 1st.

He first went on the stage following service in France in the Great War, and now although understandably finding he has to slow down, Cavan still exercises his voice every morning and keeps in touch with the world of entertainment.

Our Greetings to him and to Rita, his partner and accompanist, who have been married for 65 years.

George Frow

TECHNICAL JOTTINGS

1: Some thoughts on early recording techniques

by Denis Harbour

After reading one article in *Hillandale News* (No.197 April 1994), reading another in *Hi-Fi News* and then attending the talk by Norman White at the April London Meeting (all three concerning the reproduction and transfer of early recordings) I thought I'd jot down a few notes as food for thought.

Largely, of course, this enthusiasm would come under the heading of Psychoacoustics, as well as being pure nostalgia. An example of the former was once demonstrated in America many years ago. A recording was played to an assembly who were invited to comment on the reproduction and realism. A learned professor who was conducting the meeting told his audience he would be shortly playing a much improved version. He continued to patter for a while, and after an interval, the demonstration continued. When this finished the assembly was once again asked for their opinion. Practically all of them spoke in glowing terms about the more recent playing and how much better it sounded. It was, in fact, the same recording, repeated in exactly the same way. Modern Hi-Fi shops take enormous advantage of this technique, bending the laws of physics to tell you how, perhaps, a short length of wire or cable, or a gold-plated mains plug can improve the reproduction enormously, when in fact it has not had the slightest effect.

However, this apart, let us consider a few hard facts about recording and reproduction which, I feel, some members should look at a little more deeply.

As you will know, a purely mechanical pre-electric recorder consists of a horn coupled to a diaphragm having a stylus-bar

pivoting on its frame, one end having a cutting stylus fixed to it and the other end usually screwed to the centre of the diaphragm. A heated, polished wax blank revolves under the stylus, which is also driven linearly under it. Any sound picked up by the horn causes the diaphragm to be set in vibration, largely backwards and forwards, which in turn causes the stylus bar to move in the manner of a see-saw, thus driving the cutting stylus (for lateral recording) from side to side. The amount of power available from even the most powerful voice amounts to only a few microwatts, so the excursion of the cutter, that is the movement from side to side, is very small indeed. Recordings were done in hot little rooms, with musicians clustered around the horn. The frequency range was also severely limited (the range of octaves that can be recorded), so all sounds except certain solo instruments, and the human voice (properly trained, or developed) gave rise to a sound rather like a parrot squawking in a box. But some of the beautiful operatic voices of the Golden Age as well as certain solo musicians managed to make a recording very pleasing to listen to - especially to those who themselves have trained voices, and who are able to recognise the techniques involved. Most people will know about the electrolytic method of copying the wax master. Let it be stated briefly here that a source of surface noise was the use of graphite rubbed into the face of the wax before it went into the plating bath, where this roughness was faithfully copied.

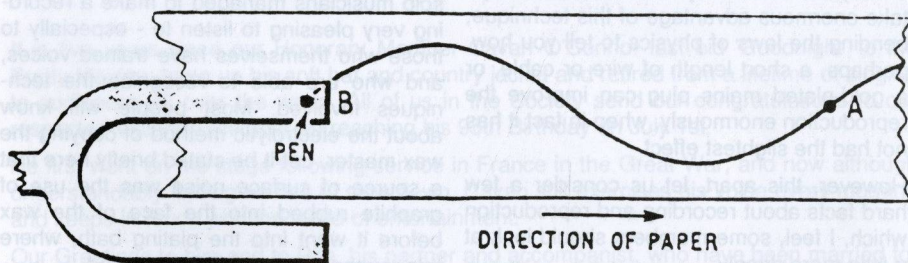
Once a hard disc has been produced, we can use the same machine, or a very much simpler one, to play our recording back, or

reproduce it. Now consider this. We have a groove which is modulated by the sounds made into the horn, but because this modulation is only slight due to an acute lack of power, and a clumsy, heavy stylus bar, cutter holder and diaphragm a very great deal of our recording is lost, the finer detail being so small that it can actually be smaller than the structure of the record material and so is lost among the noise. In a way, it is rather like seeing a very poor image on your television screen that is almost obliterated by snow or grain. This is actually because the set is picking up more interference than genuine transmission, causing a poor "signal to noise" ratio. (The unwanted signal against the wanted one.)

Now consider that we do not record music, but instead a constant tone, without harmonics, like a pure, low-pitched whistle. The diaphragm of the recording box and everything coupled to it will try to produce a "sine" or "sinusoidal" wave on the wax. The stylus

will move from side to side and an even waveform will be produced. But our enemies are there. If it were possible (easy with electronic equipment) to change the pitch of our tone, and go up and down the scale keeping the tone even in volume, something else happens called resonance. Everything that will ring or vibrate will do so at one particular frequency more easily than others. This is called resonance. Pick up almost anything - a cup, glass, sugar basin, pan tray, etc. hold one corner lightly and tap them. All will "ring" at a different frequency, and if that article were to be set up as part of a crude loudspeaker, that frequency and its higher harmonics would predominate. That is one enemy. Now consider mass. Take some heavy object and try to move it rapidly to and fro, or from side to side. The heavier it is, the more it will oppose movement. The faster you try to shake it the greater the resistance to the motion. When a body is set into motion it wants to go on

BASIC SOUND THEORY



Showing how a tuning-fork, rather than a hand-held pen, would draw a waveform on paper.
The distance between B and A represents one complete wave-form.

moving in the direction it is pushed in. The heavier it is, the greater the force required to stop it. Again, our "pendulum", formed by the arm and weight, wants to vibrate at the frequency determined by the length of the arm from pivot to weight. That would be its natural resonant frequency.

Air resonance

Should you (heaven forbid) try singing a scale in your bathroom, or any similar bare-walled place, there will be one particular note that sounds louder than the rest. That is the fundamental resonance of the room, determined by its size. There will also be harmonics, which are multiples of the fundamental. Try opening the door. The effect is called "damping", and has the same effect as the felt pads in a piano. All these are our enemies - lack of power, excessive mass, resonance (both of the mechanical moving parts and the air in the recording horn). We are not doing so well, are we? The damping, however, can come in very handy; but not a lot can be applied to a pre-electric recorder because it would use up the precious power we can't spare.

Sometimes these resonances combine, forming a nasty "peak". Other times they cancel out, forming a trough. This can sound particularly nasty when something more complex is recorded. (We will not be using our recorder for sine waves.) These things can be "excited" to excess, cutting into the adjacent groove. But wait! Even more horrors are in store. We now have to play our recording back. If we do this on a different machine, all the components will have a different size, shape and mass; so all the resonances will be of a different frequency. What a glorious combination! But there is still more to follow. We have not yet considered quite what a curse mass is. Imagine, yes, imagine, that a car is travelling along a road having a great many bends, some of them sinusoidal and some of them sharp. A low wall is built on each

side. The car steers first to the right, then to the left and so on, faster and faster. Driver's reaction apart, soon the vehicle will oppose the motion, and as speed increases, it will cease to function. Or imagine the vehicle to stay at a steady speed, but the road, without any warning turns into bends which get tighter and tighter. In both cases something will **have** to give. Clearly the car will not; so it travels on and on, knocking the wall down in its path, and damaging itself. If the walls have large excursions the damage might be greater, the car slicing through "the end of the bends". Mass opposes motion. All physical things behave like this, whatever their size, and everything is relative! We can also say everything is a compromise, but more of this later.

Now consider the recording stylus, for that is what the car represents. Even when playing a constant tone, our enemies are there. Something must give somewhere; so the precious groove is ploughed through, or the needle flexes, or rides out of the groove and does damage elsewhere. Thorn needles are the safest from this point of view, although they can, and do, if operating in an industrial atmosphere, or a room with a coal fire, grind the finer points of the record away. However, when reproducing a pre-electric record (because the frequency response is so poor, the dynamic range non-existent and the modulation low) the damage is not very great. That is because the passage of the stylus through a quiet recording has far more chance to negotiate the bends (which are not greatly cramped). Even so, damage is still common. Now let us consider (horror of horrors) electrical recording - just some of the more obvious points. Electrical recording uses transducers. What is a transducer? It is a device that changes mechanical force into electrical force, or electrical force into mechanical force. That's all. Microphones, loudspeakers, solenoids, vibrators, cutter heads, gramophone pick-ups, headphones, etc.

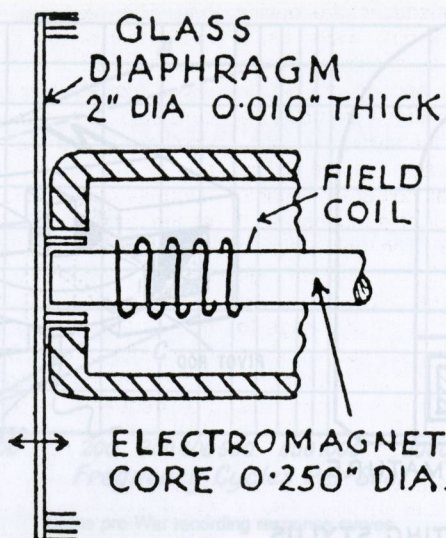
etc... To be a true transducer, the device has to be able to work both ways; i.e. a loudspeaker can work as a microphone, a cutter head as pick-up and so on. So, in principle, anyway, let us take a gramophone sound-box and remove the stylus assembly, leaving only the diaphragm. In the centre will be cemented a small coil of wire that is made to pass in and out of a magnet, as it does in a loudspeaker. The coil, passing through the "magnetic field" - that strange force that we cannot see, but will pick up steel objects, will cause a small voltage to be produced in the coil. Two such devices connected together by a length of twin flex, will form a telephone. If we take this microphone and connect it to an amplifier it will make the small alternating voltage, the signal, larger and more powerful. This can drive a speaker, so we can address a lot of people at once, but now we want to make a record. Now take the recording box, remove the horn, again cementing a small, round coil to its centre, able to move in a powerful magnet. Set the turntable going, connect the coil of the cutter-head to the output of the amplifier, and off we go. That's all. Simple isn't it? We will still have all our resonances to contend with, but now we have plenty of power to play with, and one of the ways that can be used for damping them out would be to fill the box, after sealing it up, with a temperature-stable oil, or fluid. We can use silicone now, but they didn't know about it then. But this crude apparatus, actually used, will leave much to be desired. The Western Electric cutter-head was constructed more like one of those terrible clumsy gramophone pick-ups seen years ago. The magnet was an electrical one, using a direct current through a coil of wire to a large car-type accumulator.

The audio coil - the one carrying the signal - was stationary and caused a piece of soft iron to move as a twisting force. This armature was either on pivots, or a torsion

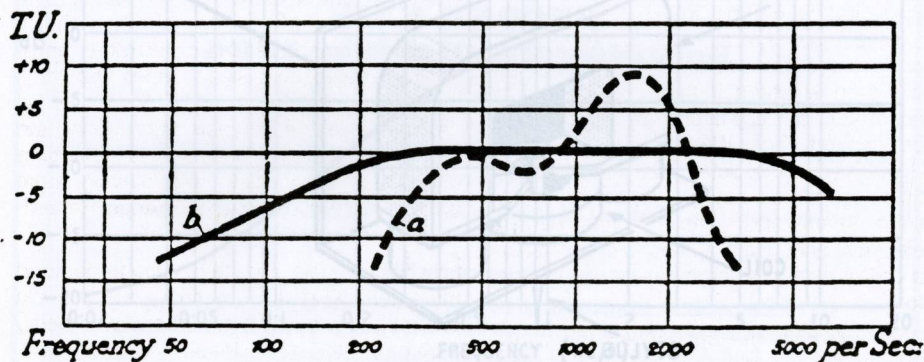
bar. The rear end of the armature was made rectangular in section, and damping was effected by this piece being pushed into a rubber or viscaloid tube, which itself consisted of a number of tubes inside one another. These were carried inside of the arm of the cutter-head, which was pivoted about its centre, and had a counterbalance at the other end. Here, at vast expense, was a system that had a bandwidth of five octaves, and a frequency response of only 5,000 cycles. But it was better than the horn, now gone for ever, which had a bandwidth of only 3,000 cycles. The lower end of the latter was around 200 Hz, but at that frequency, dropping fairly rapidly from 500Hz, it was minus 14dB (decibels). Also, there was an enormous hump in the response curve at around 1,000 cycles. The lower end of the electrical system, deliberately curtailed (a gentle "roll-off" from 250) was about 60 cycles.

Writing of the electrical system as late as 1935, H. Courtney Bryson in *The Gramophone Record* states ".....this probably represents the limit of achievement under our present system, as at the lower end of the scale, a low frequency note having a great amplitude will cause the recording stylus to cut from one groove into the next, while at the upper end it is fixed by the wavelength on the record, [this] being so short that it becomes comparable in size with the reproducing needle point which rides the track instead of following it....." It need only be said that a few short years later, during the second world war, Decca were recording ultra-sonic frequencies, and playing them back. Their Full Frequency Range Recording (FFRR) was one of the results.

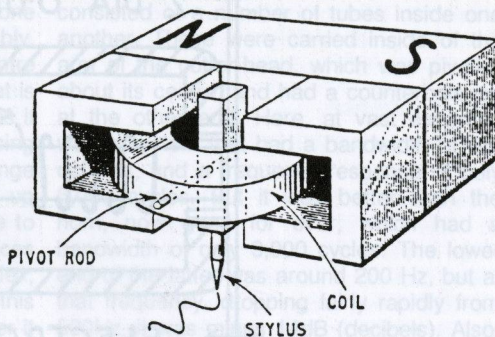
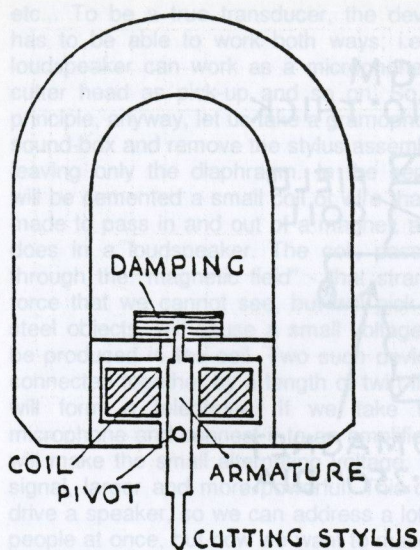
However, people were beginning to demand more details in their records, and the old blunderbus wind-up gramophone was being replaced with an electrical reproducer having a built-in radio set. They also wanted less scratch at the top end. The long, long, road to "Hi-Fi" had started.



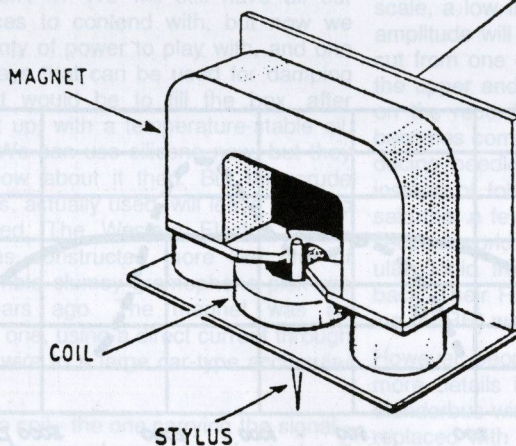
The sound-box turned into a moving-coil microphone. The magnet can be either permanent or energised. The same construction would be used for the moving-coil cutter-head.



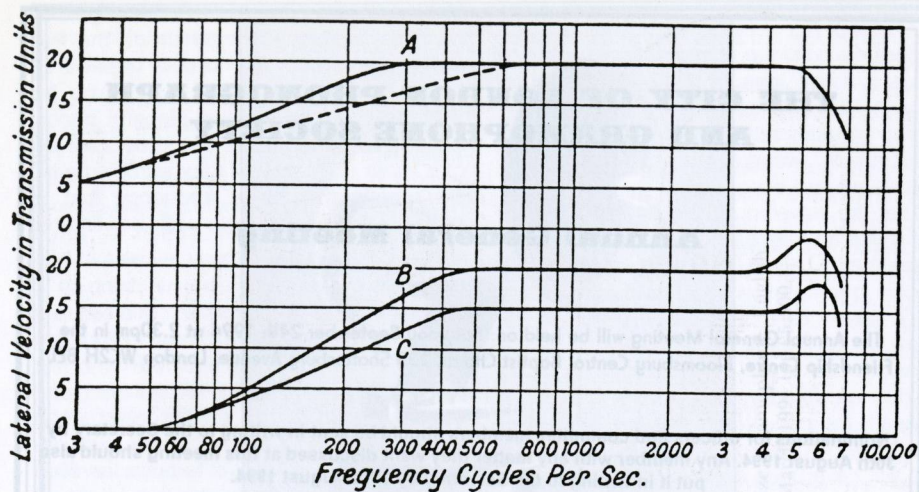
Showing the limited response of the pre-electric cutter-head, against the Western Electric moving-iron electrical head of 1925.



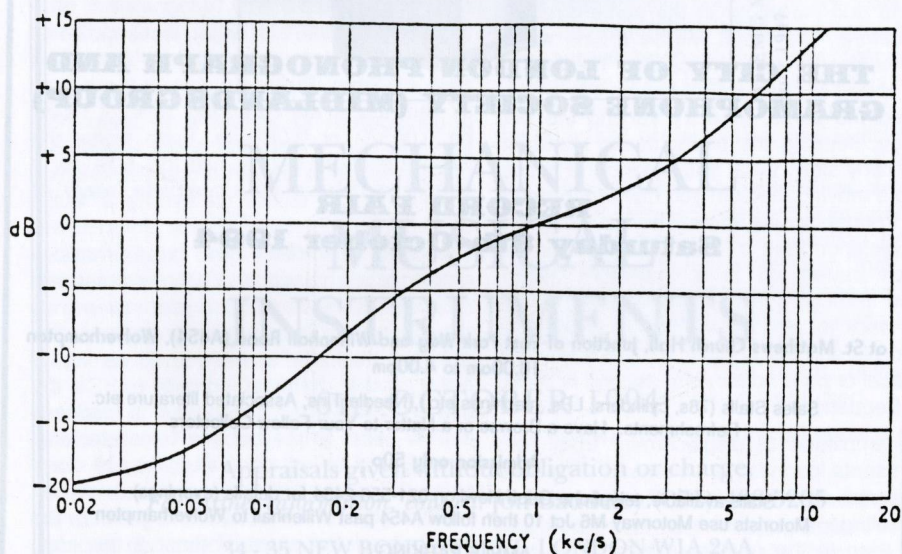
Two examples of moving-iron cutter-heads.



A "needle-armature" pick-up. Some types used a small tube as a socket for the "needle" which formed the armature. If this was ferrous, a thorn could be used.



Some pre-war recording response curves.



Just one example of a 78rpm recording curve, around 1950. The earlier ones were level from 250-300 cycles per second upwards.

THE CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday September 24th 1994 at 2.30pm in the Friendship Centre, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, 235 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EL

Nominations for officers and committee members should be sent in writing to the Secretary by 30th August 1994. Any member with any matter they want discussed at this meeting should also put it in writing to the Secretary by 30th August 1994.

THE CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY (MIDLANDS GROUP)

RECORD FAIR Saturday 8th October 1994

at St. Matthews Church Hall, junction of East Park Way and Willenhall Road (A454), Wolverhampton
10.00am to 4.00pm

Sales Stalls (78s, cylinders, LPs, machines etc.), Needle Tins, Associated literature etc.
Refreshments. Have a Browse or a Natter to Your Fellow Collectors

Admission only 50p

Stalls available, telephone Geoff Howl on [REDACTED] for details (evenings)
Motorists use Motorway M6 Jct 10 then follow A454 past Willenhall to Wolverhampton

AMPLE PARKING

Wolverhampton/Walsall buses pass the venue every few minutes (Wolverhampton Bus Station is only two minutes walk from the Railway Station). There is a two hour service from Euston.



An EMG Mk. 10 'Oversize' Gramophone, English,
circa 1947. Sold on 3rd March 1994 for £5,500.

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6TH OCTOBER 1994

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For further information, contact: Jon Baddeley [REDACTED]

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Wavelength

Before we continue, it seems reasonable to have a rough idea of just what this term means, as it is often confused with the tuning of radio sets. In this sense, it is the mechanical wavelength of the record groove we are concerned with. The reason is that the wavelength can be too short for the stylus to negotiate. So try the following experiment: take a long strip of paper - a double newsheet will do - and place it flat on a table. Take a coloured pen that will show up on the printed surface, and hold it near one end of the paper. Ask an assistant to pull as steadily as possible the paper beneath the pen. When you are finished, if you have held the pen quite still, a straight line will have been drawn across the paper. Now put paper and pen back to the original place, but this time, keeping pen on paper, draw a straight line backwards and forwards, at right angles to the first line. A heavy line will result. Again, ask the assistant to pull the paper in the same direction as before. The result will be a sine wave, with a line through the centre. Try varying the speed of the paper, keeping the writing speed the same, then try varying the pen speed, keeping the paper speed constant, and fairly slow. What you have done is this: onto a moving medium you have recorded a low frequency sine wave. The wavelength is the distance from a "zero" point on the line which travels up to a maximum height, down through zero to a maximum depth and back to zero again. This is known as a full cycle and the number of full cycles on a musical or pure note in one second is called the frequency.

The amplitude of displacement from zero represents loudness or volume of an electrical signal, usually in volts. It is an alternating voltage, going first in one direction (up) and then in the reverse (down). The zero line is the point of the change-over, and so the voltage is non-existent, or zero. That's

all that needs to be said at this stage. To find the wavelength, simply divide the frequency (pen) into the velocity (speed of paper). It should be noted that, if you try this experiment on a round piece of paper, revolving on a turntable, the speed will be not a linear one, and will vary with diameter. This means that for a frequency that is constant, the wavelength will be shorter towards the centre.

To find the wavelength at any point on a record (without a calibrated microscope) take a guess at the highest frequency recorded (for that will be the shortest wavelength), pick a point on the disc, and measure the diameter at that point. Now multiply by Pi (3.14159). That will give you the circumference - the difference travelled in one rotation. Multiply by the rotational speed (78rpm) and divide by the number of seconds in one minute (60). Finally, divide by your chosen frequency (one can only guess, but I suggest 5,000 for early electric recordings). So $10" \times 3.14159 \times 78 \div 60 \div 5000 = 0.0081681$ or eight thousandths of an inch. For metric multiply your answer by 25.4 = 0.2mm. Pretty small for a thorn, isn't it? But nearer the label, say at 4", it would be 0.0032", or 0.082mm. Even worse the half wavelength is only half this size, for a needle can't travel on a complete "wave" at once - can it?

We have now seen how large, massive moving parts have pronounced resonances, and how the mass of these parts, as well as the resonances can not only cause distortion, but damage to the record as well - quite severe damage, sometimes. So the use of a mechanical reproducer is madness if it is used to playback a later electrical recording. Let us see why. As we have seen, the upper limit, having a such a short wavelength, cannot be much larger than the structure of the material itself if the copy was made by rubbing fine graphite into the wax to make it conductive for the playing bath. The record may have been cut with a

cold stylus, and the material, shellac, having some old broken stock ground up it, all contributed to a noisy surface.

When we were looking at the sound box (or recording box) we tend to think in terms of the stylus bar as well as the diaphragm moving in see-saw fashion, the diaphragm moving like a piston. Would that it did! The stylus, or needle, tries to follow the groove and moves, let us say, to the right. Because of its mass, it wants to keep on going, but in the next tiny fraction of a second it is required to move in the opposite direction, and then back again. The stylus bar will behave rather like a piece of rope when one end is grasped and shaken up and down. It will flex, and vibrations will be transmitted up it as a ripple. When it has reached the centre of the diaphragm, it may be just in time to cancel out vibrations just starting to travel up. The diaphragm also behaves like this - being pushed forward, violently pulled back - and it will flex in a most complicated way, "breaking up" as it's called. Very little damping is possible, in any case, only adding to the stiffness.

Now let us consider some later recording techniques. If a means of reproducing a record was found that didn't have all these complexities and if needle would be able to follow a groove no matter how short the wavelengths, and the grooves didn't run into each other, we could extend the frequency response at both ends, have a larger dynamic range (the ratio between say, a solo instrument playing softly, and a hundred musicians playing full blast) a better signal to noise ratio..... It just was not possible, of course, without electronics. The most obvious thing to do first of all, was to make things lighter and smaller, having a lot less mass, and putting resonances outside the desired bandwidth. So they did, and pick-ups appeared where the needle itself was the armature - the only moving part. But they also had to record in a different way. An electrical cutter head given a "flat"

signal, that is of the same level for all frequencies, a groove at the top or high end would be so tiny as to be right down amongst the noise, perhaps even masked by the noise. At the other end of the scale, the low frequency end, the armature would move to such an extent, that before it reached the very low notes, it would cut into the grooves at either side. The cure is fairly simple. By using what amounts to a kind of tone control, we curtail the bass by a certain amount, then we increase the treble, again by a certain amount. We then play back with a pick-up feeding into another "tone control" that was the exact opposite of the recording. As it is the inverse of the "recording characteristic" the signal is now flat again. We would now use the knobs to twiddle and boost or cut whatever we liked.

I have, of course, over-simplified the above. The "equalisation", as it is called, had to be very accurately done. At first, there was no international standard, each recording company used its own amount of equalisation. Later representatives of the major companies agreed upon a European Standard. Thus many of the later electrically recorded records used different playback curves, and the early hi-fi pre-amplifiers had switchable characteristics. There was Decca, E.M.I., C.C.I.R. and N.A.B., to name a few, as well as an "early electric" position. Some people thought that their records sounded better when using a curve other than that designed for a particular record. If one were to play back a record without applying the tonal correction, a very thin bass and piercing treble would be heard, unless a crystal or ceramic pick-up were used.

Now that we know what it is all about, I sum up as follows:

- 1) Playing an old, pre-electric record with a sound-box, although leaving much to be desired, is reasonably safe, because the recorded level is not high, and the frequency response is severely limited, and so

this period (all of whom had made acoustic recordings).

therefore is the wavelength. The large "peaks" at around 2,000 cycles may give some trouble.

2) Playing an early electrically recorded record is a little more risky because the bandwidth is a little broader, and the velocity higher. It is not so safe.

3) Playing a later recording with a sound-box is madness. The enormous mass of the moving parts cannot follow the extended frequency range and higher velocity. If a thorn is used, the tip will flex, and although not perhaps not damaging the record, will give rise to a very unpleasant sound. An attempt should be made to find the recording characteristics when playing back records electronically. If the type of pick-up using a standard needle or thorn must be used, choose one with as small an armature as possible. Bear in mind that a needle-armature may not work with a non-ferrous "needle", depending on construction. In any case the output will be much lower, giving a poor "signal to noise ratio".

It might be interesting to experiment with a horn using a pressure unit, as was used in the early cinema days. Later cinema speakers used horns for the treble only. Messrs. Vitavox, if they still exist, should be approached. Horns are very efficient, and need very little power to drive them. A few watts (five or six) is quite enough to blow the roof off. The horn on a Roxy cinema loudspeaker reproduced the whole range. It was about 7 feet in length. It took less than ten watts to fill a cinema having 2,500 seats.

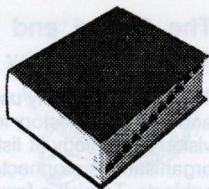
Footnotes

When dubbing copies of old records from different parts, bear in mind that there are at least two "78" speeds, and the method used by Norman White, of Nimbus Records, is possibly the best one. There are a number of reasons for the variation in speed. The first is that with a governor-controlled recording machine, there is no standard to go by, although certainly a gravity motor is about the best ever devised.

The studio recording machine turntables had a stroboscope painted or engraved on the edge of the turntable. It cannot be accurate for 78rpm at either 50Hz or 60Hz. The former will give a speed of 77.92 rpm with 77 bars, and the latter will give a speed of 78.26rpm with 92 bars. The frequency of the mains supply is not constant. If the engineer had used his "loaf" and recorded on the beginning of the blank a note from a standard tuning fork, things might have been easier.

On later recordings, as Mr White was saying, the volume went up and down. This may have been due to the fear of over-cutting. Before the days of the magnetic tape recorder and the advance head to control the feed of the lead screw, the engineer had to be able to read a music score. He therefore judged when it was necessary to reduce the level. Engineers being engineers and not musicians, except in a very few cases, anything was likely to happen. But the artistes were able to listen to a recording, made at the same time, and played back to them for approval.

REVIEWS



The Phonograph and its Inventor - Thomas Alvah Edison, 1878

by F. J. Garbit, M.D., Ph.D.

This rare early pamphlet has been reprinted in the U.S.A. The 16-page booklet opens with a Memoir of T. A. Edison. This is a brief outline of his life up to the year 1878. The reader learns that Edison's father's ancestors emigrated to the U.S.A. from Holland, but that they were originally of English stock. Each of his inventions up to 1878 are described briefly and the bulk of this pamphlet is given over to what the author describes "as the last and greatest of all" Edison's inventions "The Phonograph or Talking Machine". This is the earliest reference I have come across to the expression "talking machine".

A detailed description is given of the Phonograph and of the many tasks it was claimed it could do. It was envisaged that the clockwork motor would be universal power source for the Phonograph. Great educational prospects were foreseen for the Phonograph. Interestingly the recording of serious music by artists such as Patti and Kellogg was seen as educational, not entertainment. F. J. Garbit ends up by calling the Phonograph "The Tenth Wonder of the World!"

This booklet is handsomely produced. There is hardly a blemish in it. The original must be in extremely fine condition to give such good copies. It is a snip at the \$4.00 asking price plus \$2.00 airmail postage.

The Edison Improved Phonograph

by E. T. Gilliland. Paper Read Before the Monthly Meeting of the Electric Club, May 19 1888.

This is another first class reproduction of an early pamphlet from the same stable as the one reviewed above. It is another fine production consisting of 12 pages. The author gives a brief

history of Edison's development of the Phonograph. He also claims that Edison's patents of 1878 had drawings of nearly one hundred forms of apparatus. He also claimed that all the features that the developers of the Graphophone had claimed were their invention are shown and described in these 1878 patents of Edison.

Again the facsimile is almost blemish free showing that the original must be in excellent condition. The original engraved drawings have also reproduced well. This is a superb production and like its stablemate is priced at \$4.00 plus \$2.00 airmail postage.

I can thoroughly recommend these two pamphlets and urge all interested to buy them now as only 500 copies of each were produced. If both are purchased together at the same time the cost is reduced to \$7.00 plus \$2.00 airmail postage. Our thanks must go to the Sheena family for making these rare pamphlets available for wider circulation. They can be purchased direct from **Sam Sheena**, Westbury, NY 11590, U.S.A. at the prices quoted above.

Chris Hamilton

American Celebrity Recordings 1900 - 1925 by Julian Morton Moses

This work was originally published in 1936 as the *Collectors' Record Guide: American Celebrity Discs*. In 1949 it was expanded and published as *Collectors' Guide to American Recordings 1895 - 1925*. Dover Publications Inc. reprinted it and published it in 1977. This issue is published by Monarch Record Enterprises of Dallas, Texas as *American Celebrity Recordings 1900 - 1925*.

For this edition the introductory sections have been re-written and a couple of extra chapters included, one called *Current Values of 78s* and the other *Re-recordings - LPs and CDs*. The listing of celebrity artists is almost identical to the Dover Publications edition. There are a couple of extra chapters in the main section, *Fifty Favorite Acoustic Recordings* (where the author lists his own favourites) and *Vocal Standards - The Metropolitan Opera 1929 - 1933* (where the author lists great productions of the Metropolitan Opera Company during this period and gives his impressions of 24 of the greatest of singers of this period (all of whom had made acoustic recordings).

Not having a copy of any of the earlier editions of this book, I borrowed a copy of the 1977 reprint edition to compare with the new edition for this review. Apart from the changes listed above the new book is very similar to the 1977 edition. As far as I can see the page numbers are exactly as in the 1977 edition until John Charles Thomas is listed. None of his records are given in the 1977 edition where the new edition lists his Vocalion and Brunswick recordings. It is a well laid out work and all the American recordings of the various celebrity artists mentioned are listed in catalogue number order. In some cases imported recordings are also listed. There are several omissions. No Edison records are listed. For instance Maggie Teyte is considered a celebrity artist and her American Columbias are listed but no mention is made of her Edison recordings. The same comments apply to Alessandro Bonci and Emmy Destinn. There is also no mention of Ernest Ansermet, Frederick Stock's recordings with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Modest Altschuler's recordings with the Russian Symphony Orchestra (all on Columbia). Only one Columbia of Eugene Ysaÿe conducting the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra is mentioned.

It is a great pity that when the revisions were made these details were not included. In spite of this the book is a useful reference work for collectors and is good value for money. For those who already have the 1977 edition it is probably not worth buying this issue although at only **\$12.95** plus **\$1.95** shipping it is not much to pay for some extra information. I give this book a qualified recommendation and advise those wanting a copy to buy it before it goes out of print. It is available from **Monarch Record Enterprises**, 100 Highland Park Village, Dallas, Texas 75205-2788, U.S.A. Monarch accept, Mastercard, Visa and American Express cards.

Chris Hamilton

The Sound and Vision Year Book 1994/95 edited by Andrew Emmerson

This is an extremely useful booklet. It is a hobby and heritage directory for collectors of sound and vision technology. It lists names of persons and organisations connected with all manner of subjects. To pick a few: Amateur Radio, Amusement Machines, Calculators, Cinemas, Computers, Gramophones and Phonographs, Magic Lanterns, Telegraph Instruments are listed; so are dozens of others.

Only last night I had a call from a collector of radios in a nearby village asking for some information. He had purchased a Columbia Grafonola at an auction in Montrose that morning. It was not working and he was looking for advice on how to put it right. He had got my name from the C.L.P.G.S. advert in this booklet. This shows how useful this booklet is. Quite often there is a crossover from gramophones and phonographs into other allied hobby areas like wireless and radio. If we need a contact in one of these fields the relevant information may well be at hand in this excellently produced publication. It is an absolute mine of information consisting of 96 well-filled pages and is well worth the asking price of **£3.50** post free. This booklet is published in association with the annual National Vintage Communications Fair and can be obtained from **Sunrise Press**, 2-4 Brook Street, Bampton, Devon EX16 9LY, tel: 0398-331532.

Chris Hamilton

HELP PLEASE!

Can anyone supply me with copies of *On the Outside Looking in/The Girl who loves a Soldier* both Lew Stone and his and His Orchestra on DECCA F 7169, *Canadian Capers/Tiger Rag* w.Lew Stone and His Orchestra on DECCA F 3839 and *I Can't Give You Anything But Love/Sentimental Gentleman from Georgia* with Harry Roy and His Orchestra on PARLOPHONE R 1658? I want them for a friend who has broken his copies in a recent house move. Any reasonable price paid. Contact Andrew Walter at [REDACTED]

REVIEWS



Jussi Björling - Opera, Lieder and Song

This CD is one of Conifer's *Happy Days* Series. It is a well-filled disc of many of Jussi Björling's most popular recordings and some of his Swedish songs which were not issued in the U.K. All the items were recorded during the earlier part of Björling's career just when he was launched on the international arena and they date from 1936 to 1941. The disc opens with *M'Appari tutt'amor* from Act 3 of Flotow's *Marta*, then two songs from Verdi's *Rigoletto*, *Questa o quella* and the duet *E il sol dell'anima*, where he is partnered by the soprano Hjordis Schymberg are heard. This is followed by *Ah si, sen mio* and *Di quella pira* from Verdi's *Il Trovatore*. Next come arias from Meyerbeer's *L'Africana*, Verdi's *Aida* (*Celeste Aida*), Bizet's *Carmen* (*La fleur que tu m'avais jetée*), Poncielli's *La Gioconda*, Puccini's *Tosca* and *La Fanciulla Del West*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and Verdi's *Requiem*. The lieder on this disc are Richard Strauss' *Morgen* and *Cäcilie*, Beethoven's *Adelaide*. This programme finishes up with two Swedish songs and a song from Millöcker's operetta *Der Bettelstudent*.

Until this CD arrived for review I had not come across the work of the remastering engineer Ted Kendall and not being very happy with some of the transfers which other transfer engineers had done for Conifer I was not looking forward to listening to this CD. However I was duly surprised. Ted Kendall has done a good job. The surface noise of the original pressings has been subdued sufficiently for the listener to enjoy

Jussi Björling's beautiful voice in all its pristine glory without all the higher frequencies being removed and causing a dull sound. I enjoyed this CD immensely and I was able to compare most of the transfers with original pressings from my own collection. This confirmed that Ted Kendall's transfers are expertly done and I can recommend this CD to all lovers of good singing. It endorsed my belief that Jussi Björling possessed one of the finest tenor voices and it is a voice I much prefer to that of some of today's celebrated tenors such as Luciano Pavarotti. This disc is an excellent bargain priced at around £7.99 from all good record dealers. The catalogue number is **Conifer CDHD 214**.

Vintage Gilbert and Sullivan

After enjoying the above mentioned Jussi Björling CD so much I was encouraged to look for more of the work of remastering engineer Ted Kendall. While on holiday in Cheltenham I bought the above titled double CD album of Gilbert and Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore* and *The Mikado*.

The 1930 recording of *H.M.S. Pinafore* (originally issued as HMV D 1844 - D 1852) with Henry Lytton, George Baker, Charles Goulding, Darrell Fancourt, Sydney Granville, Stuart Robertson, Elsie Griffin, Nellie Briercliffe, Bertha Lewis and Symphony Orchestra conducted by Dr Malcolm Sargent and recorded under the supervision of Rupert D'Oyly Carte has been expertly transferred onto the first disc. I know this performance very well as I have the original 78s. Once again Ted Kendall has done a good transfer and the voices and orchestra come over clearly with little of the obtrusive surface noise that my own 78s produce. Henry Lytton is absolutely superb as Sir Joseph Porter KCB. I do not think a better performance has been recorded. His portrayal of Sir Joseph is full of humour and

brings out the satire of Gilbert's libretto in a way no one else can. Darrell Fancourt as Dick Deadeye is most enjoyable. No one portrays Little Buttercup better than Bertha Lewis. In fact I do not think any of the soloists have been miscast. I enjoyed this recording very much and Ted has brought it to life for a new generation of Savoyards to enjoy.

The last track of the first disc and all of the second disc are devoted to the 1936 recording of *The Mikado* (originally issued as HMV DB 4038 - DB 4048). The soloists here are Darrell Fancourt, Derek Oldham, Martyn Green, Sydney Granville, Leslie Rands, Brenda Bennett, Marjorie Eyre, Elizabeth Nickell-Lean and Josephine Curtis. They are accompanied by a Symphony Orchestra conducted by Isidore Godfrey and once again the recording is supervised by Rupert D'Oyly Carte. Of the three recordings of *The Mikado* by the D'Oyly Carte Company on 78s this, the middle of them, is to my mind the finest. It has the unsurpassed Darrell Fancourt in tip top form as The Mikado. Fancourt is The Mikado on

all three of the above mentioned 78 sets and each of his interpretations of the rôle is different. Derek Oldham, a fine tenor and much underrated, as Nanki-Poo is also on top form (especially in his rendition of *A Wandering Minstrel*). Martyn Green, who took over Sir Henry Lytton's rôles when he retired is magnificent as Ko-Ko. Josephine Curtis as Katisha is another fine performance. The rendition of *There Is Beauty* by Green and Curtis is spell-binding. It is my favourite version and I would consider the 78 for one of my 'Desert Island Discs'. EMI transferred this performance to HMV LPs in the mid 1950s but this transfer is far superior.

I enjoyed these transfers so much that I shall now be playing them instead of the original 78s and can thoroughly recommend these CDs. They are available on a **Conifer Happy Days** double album **CDHD 253/254** and at a bargain price of around £10 from any good record shop.

Chris Hamilton

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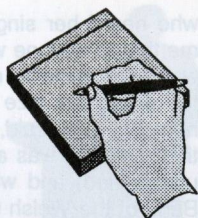
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LETTERS



Help Please!

Dear Chris,
I am wondering whether anyone can help me. For years I have been trying to obtain a recording (78rpm or 33rpm) of three beautiful songs, but am fast losing hope.

I heard *I Left My Heart at Suvla Bay* while I was living in Geelong, Victoria, and feel sure it must be of Great War origin. *I Thought I Heard a Magpie Call Across the Tasman Sea* was broadcast over Australian radio and may date from the mid-1960s.

Lorena (which I have never heard) was published in 1857, the work of the Revd. H. D. L. Webster and J. P. Webster. It was much loved by both the Union and the Confederacy during the war between the States. It must have been recorded, perhaps on a cylinder.

If anyone could possibly send a cassette of even one of these songs, I will gladly reimburse its cost and the postage.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Cliffe, [REDACTED]
Avenue, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 2UL

Klipschorn Loudspeakers

Dear Chris,
Readers who envied Peter E. Yates with his magnificent Klipschorn loudspeakers may be interested to know that *Wireless World* May 1970 contains an article which should enable any keen D. I. Y. enthusiast to produce an equivalent system for a very low cost indeed.

I can personally vouch for the efficiency of

these horns in the bass region; I have constructed a lightweight pair from 3-ply (hardly the ideal material for heavy duty bass) which I use for portable public address work, where power is limited to car batteries but high quality music is still required.

Last weekend I was amplifying the sound of an electronic organ in a moderate size hall when some heavy 'pedal' notes were played. I realised the volume settings were too high as several members of the audience looked uncomfortably in my direction. As I went to turn it down I glanced at the power meter...1½ watts!

Regards,
Adrian Tuddenham, Bath, Somerset

Useful Tips

Dear Chris,
I bought some WD40 spray for freeing up sticking locks. The vendor was reading through a manufacturers list of the many uses for WD40; examples included:

Removing the sticky deposit left when price labels are removed.

Anglers get better results by spraying their bait with it [sounds fishy to me].

And more to the point, WD40 can be used to clean the grooves of 78rpm records with a soft cloth. If this already is not common knowledge it might be of use to some readers.

All the best,
Ian Calderwood, Newton Abbot, Devon

More Help Please!

Dear Sir,

I am the Archivist for the Musical Box Society of Great Britain (MBSGB) and for many years have been researching the Aeolian Company of GB and US - mostly Pianolas and Organs.

I am now looking at the records produced by Vocalion and wonder if you can help. Do any of your members have an original record catalogue that they could photocopy for me? (I'm happy to pay for the work to be done.)

Also, I would particularly like to know how many titles were recorded on the Aeolian Company's own pipe organ in Regent Street, London? I have a copy of a blue label Vocalion myself, number K 05265 which has a *Recessional* on one side and Parry's *Jerusalem* on the other. A list of titles in this series would be very helpful, or do any members have copies of these records?

I hope some of your members can help me.

Yours faithfully,

Kevin McElhone, [REDACTED]
Kettering, Northants. NN16 9QR

Clara Butt

Dear Sir,

As a footnote to the delightful article on Clara Butt, it might be worth noting the comments of the tenor Edmund Goffron

who heard her sing in Hyde Park. He told me that to anyone who had not heard her it was impossible to convey any real idea of the enormous size of her voice. When he heard her, he said, he was at the Serpentine, and she was at Marble Arch. She was unamplified, and was accompanied by the Band of the Welsh Guards. At that distance he had difficulty hearing the band, but no trouble hearing Dame Clara. She absolutely drowned them!

Yours faithfully,

Michael P. Walters, Tring, Herts.

Arthur Nikisch

Dear Sir,

Your readers may like to know that there is a later and, one hopes with the advance of technology, a better transfer of the Nikisch recording of Beethoven's 5th Symphony now available. It is part of a complete set of the conductor's recordings on SYMPOSIUM 1087 and 1088.

Yours faithfully,

Eliot B. Levin, Symposium Records,
East Barnet

OBITUARY

Bill Astin

I am sure that many members of the Society will share the sadness of the Northern Group at the loss of its stalwart member Bill Astin of Harrogate, who died of a heart attack on June 14th.

Bill was actively involved with the former Yorkshire Branch from its inception in 1980, indeed it was his many contacts which helped to make the formation of a branch feasible. Over the years he served the Group in many ways, including a period as Chairman, and through his contacts secured the use of a delightful room at Leeds Industrial Museum as a regular meeting place for the Group.

He was a great champion of the hobby of collecting and restoring gramophones and phonographs, and made a formidable partnership with his son John, usually being in the right place at the right time! Working exhibitions were staged with John, often raising funds for church or charity, many talks were given, and through his great enthusiasm many a spark of interest was kindled, swelling the ranks of the collecting fraternity and membership of the Society.

With his engineering background Bill found much pleasure in restoring machines not only for his and John's collection, but for many other people too. Bill was an active and popular member of his local church and community; kind, helpful, and with a ready sense of fun, he seemed a good deal younger than his 73 years. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him. Our sympathy goes out to his widow, Vera and his son John.

Paul Austwick

REPORTS



London Meeting, May 19th 1994

The Remastering Voice was the title Andrew Walter of EMI, our guest for the evening, gave to his talk. Andrew described his work at EMI and illustrated his talk with several musical examples.

Andrew started off with giving some brief biographical details of himself. He was Bishop's Chorister at Salisbury Cathedral. After seven years there he won a scholarship to Lancing College in Sussex, where he studied composition, conducting and the organ under Nigel Cox. He later won another scholarship, this time to Winchester Cathedral, to study the organ under Martin Neary. From there he went to Manchester University to study Sound Engineering. After graduation he was fortunate to get a job at EMI as a Classical Editor. This he felt was rather like going back to school as he worked under a producer and had to do everything he was told. Later he accepted a job as a Transfer Engineer under Keith Hardwick. After Keith retired he was promoted to take his place.

Andrew explained that he did work for EMI and for Testament, a label set up by Stewart Brown to issue historical material on CD. Testament has an exclusive agreement with EMI to re-issue historical recordings that EMI do not plan to re-issue themselves.

A video extract from a Pathé film was shown. We saw Sir Edward Elgar conduct-

ing a rehearsal of his *Pomp and Circumstance No.1* with the London Symphony Orchestra. We heard Elgar speaking to the orchestra. This was a fascinating historical document. This film was made to mark the opening of the Abbey Road Studios in 1931. This was the cue for Andrew to give the audience a brief description of Abbey Road. There are three main recording studios with a penthouse studio available when necessary. In addition there are three digital remastering rooms. The site was purchased for £16,500 and HMV spent £100,000 to modify the building and install new equipment (about £5,000,000 in today's terms).

Andrew told us that he uses modern technology most of the time to aid him in his remastering work. He uses two DAT (Digital Audio Tape) recorders. The two machines are connected to each other via a computer which is fitted with the CEDAR (Computer Enhanced Digital Audio Restoration) system. This system works in real time and has three programmes: De-scratch, De-crackle and De-hiss. The incoming signal is analysed and up to 2,500 clicks every second can be removed. To aid him in joining up the different sides of a 78 recording Andrew uses another computer system, Sonic Solutions. As there can be as much as 5 or 6 decibels difference in hiss level between the end of one side and the beginning of the next the Sonic Solution system makes it much easier to make inaudible side joins. Andrew believes in using these systems sparingly and according to him the art of being a good transfer engineer is to know exactly how much of the systems to use. Judging from the musical examples he played Andrew has judged this down to a T.

The first commercial recording he played us was an extract from Elgar's *Violin Concerto* with Yehudi Menuhin and the LSO under the composer (recorded in 1932) from the EMI CD set *The Elgar Edition Vol. 2*. The clarity and detail Andrew obtained from the originals was superb. Andrew then ex-

plained how he went about choosing the records he uses in his transfers. He checks with the Archive at Hayes to see if they have the original metalwork and commercial pressings. In the case of the Elgar Violin Concerto there were only two metals that were serviceable. Hayes also had a set of commercial pressings. Andrew borrowed these and pressings from both the BBC and the National Sound Archive. In addition he had copies from various private collections. All these pressings suffered from a problem well known to collectors of 78s - Hayes Gravel. This prompted Andrew to cast his net further afield. He got pressings from EMI's associates in India and Australia. These were better, especially the Indian pressings. Lastly Andrew approached Jack Pfeiffer of RCA. Metal masters, which should have been returned to Hayes years before, were found in the vaults at Camden. These were sent over to Andrew and after trying out all the possibilities Andrew settled on a mix of commercial pressings and Camden metalwork for his final transfer to CD. I have the original LP transfer and the original CD transfer and Andrew's version leaves both standing!

The next musical excerpt we heard also came from the *Elgar Edition Vol.2*. It was the 2nd of Three Characteristic Pieces Op. 10: *Sérénade Mauresque* recorded in 1929 with the composer conducting the New Symphony Orchestra. This came from Elgar's own test pressing. It is the only copy in existence of this recording. In spite of some damage to the pressing and in spite of the pitch dropping by a third between the beginning of the record and the end Andrew was able to make a surprisingly good transfer. One advantage Andrew has is perfect pitch and by judicious use of the pitch shifting device on his studio turntable Andrew was able to overcome the pitch problem.

Other recordings we heard were: Handel's aria *Dank sei dir, Herr* sung by Kirsten Flagstad from a previously unissued 1948

recording; Brahms' *Intermezzo Op.119* played by Solomon in a previously unissued 1950 recording (here Andrew let us hear a copy of the original tape master, where the engineer had called out the take number); a section from the *Dawn Chorus* from Ravel's *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* from a 1947 recording with soloists and the Chorus and Orchestra of French Radio conducted by Ernest Bour (an absolutely stunning recording beautifully transferred); an excerpt from Artur Rubinstein playing Chopin's *First Piano Concerto* w. LSO conducted by Barbirolli; Dinu Lipatti playing Chopin's *Waltz No.5* in A flat major Op.42 from his last recital at Besançon on 16th September 1950; Tito Gobbi singing *Di provenza il mar* from Verdi's *La Traviata* (another stunning recording from 1950); Olivier Messiaen playing the organ in an excerpt from his own *Le Banquet céleste* in a 1956 stereo recording and finally Jascha Heifetz in an excerpt from his 1949 recording of Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham.

One interesting problem Andrew often encounters in his work occurs when he uses metal masters. Many of them have spindle holes that are not the right size. When they are too small Andrew has to carefully drill the hole larger with a Black and Decker and when they are too large he can spend hours centring the hole in the correct position.

From the amount of questions asked by the audience and by the fact that the time passed so quickly it was evident that the audience enjoyed the evening immensely. We had one of the most interesting evenings I have been to at the National Sound Archive and Andrew has shown us that he is a master at his craft and that his innate musical sense ensures that everything he does in the mastering studio is carried out with accuracy, care, precision and taste to give an end result that is a joy to listen to and above all makes musical sense.

Ariel

**Midlands Group Meeting, held at
Carrs Lane Methodist Centre,
Birmingham, 19th March 1994**

This meeting opened with Phil Bennett, our Secretary, playing one of the two Miller-Morris cylinders recorded on 25th September 1993 at the Midlands Group Record Fair, which celebrated the Group's 25th birthday. The Society's President, George Frow, congratulated the Midland Group on its anniversary and then all the Group Committee members added a few brief words of welcome.

The second part of the programme was entitled *Fats Waller and Other Pianists*. Phil Bennett commenced with a detailed history of Fats Waller's musical career. He played Fats' first record *Muscle Shoals Blues* from October 1922 and then Phil went on to demonstrate Fats' brilliant work as a pianist in solo work, accompanying various blues singers and with various jazz groups. Fats Waller's love of playing the pipe organ was demonstrated with *Thou Swell* from 1928 where he accompanied his friend and mentor, the great James P. Johnson. After 1929 he was employed as a vocalist to complement his piano playing, but it was wireless broadcasting that gave him national prominence.

Ed Parker rounded off the evening with *Other Pianists*. All in the jazz vein, we heard Duke Ellington, George Shearing and Ralph Shirm amongst others. They covered the period from the 1920s to the 1950s. A wide variety of styles was heard along with an enjoyable and varied musical selection.

The audience enthusiastically applauded Phil and Ed, obviously appreciative of the hard work both had put into the preparation of their programme.

Geoff Howl

**Midlands Group Meeting held at
Carrs Lane Methodist Centre,
Birmingham on 21st May 1994**

In the rare absence of Eddie Dunn, our Chairman, Phil Bennett welcomed a good attendance of members and friends.

Two varied programmes were on offer this evening. The first, by your reporter, was entitled *Music Hall Greats*. We heard a brief account of 12 of the most celebrated of the early artistes, with some details of their recording careers. Some were frequent visitors to the recording studios like Harry Champion, Florrie Forde and George Formby Senior, while others like Wilkie Bard, Gus Elen, Hetty King, George Lashwood, Little Tich, Lily Morris, Vesta Tilley, Vesta Victoria and Marie Lloyd were less frequent.

Each artist had one of their 78s played with a mention of their best known songs (in some cases never recorded). The most amusing record seemed to be *Grandfather's Clock* with George Formby Senior, though Lily Morris' *Why Am I Always the Bridesmaid* came a close second.

The second programme was *Vocal Jazz* presented by Richard Taylor. The selections all came from LP transfers. Ten items of varying styles were played. Richard included the first 'scat' vocal ever recorded - Louis Armstrong singing *Heebie-Jeebies* from 1926. Among others we heard Billie Holiday's 1937 version of *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, Bessie Smith's *Moan You Moaners* from 1930 and a more obscure item from 1929 - Texas Alexander (accompanied by the guitar of Lonnie Johnson) singing *When You Set To Thinking*.

Probably the most striking of Richard's selections was his last offering in which the female trio Sweet Substitute singing *Runnin' Wild* (a recording made in 1977) with its close affinity to the style of the Boswell Sisters showed off the advantage of modern recording techniques.

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Geoff Howl

Birmingham on 16th July 1994

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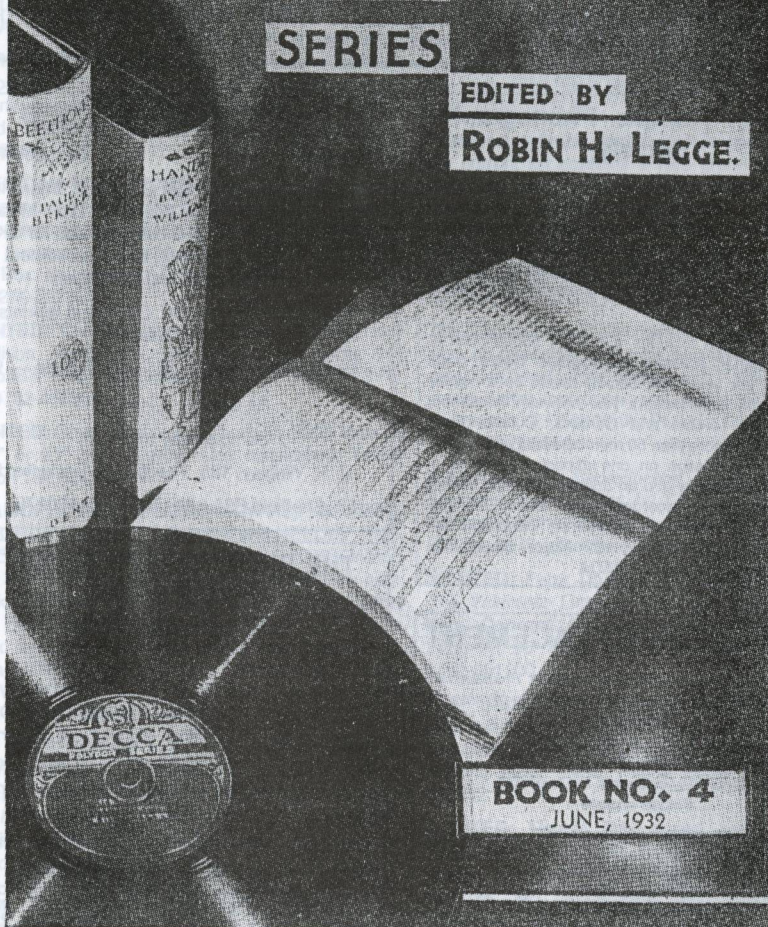
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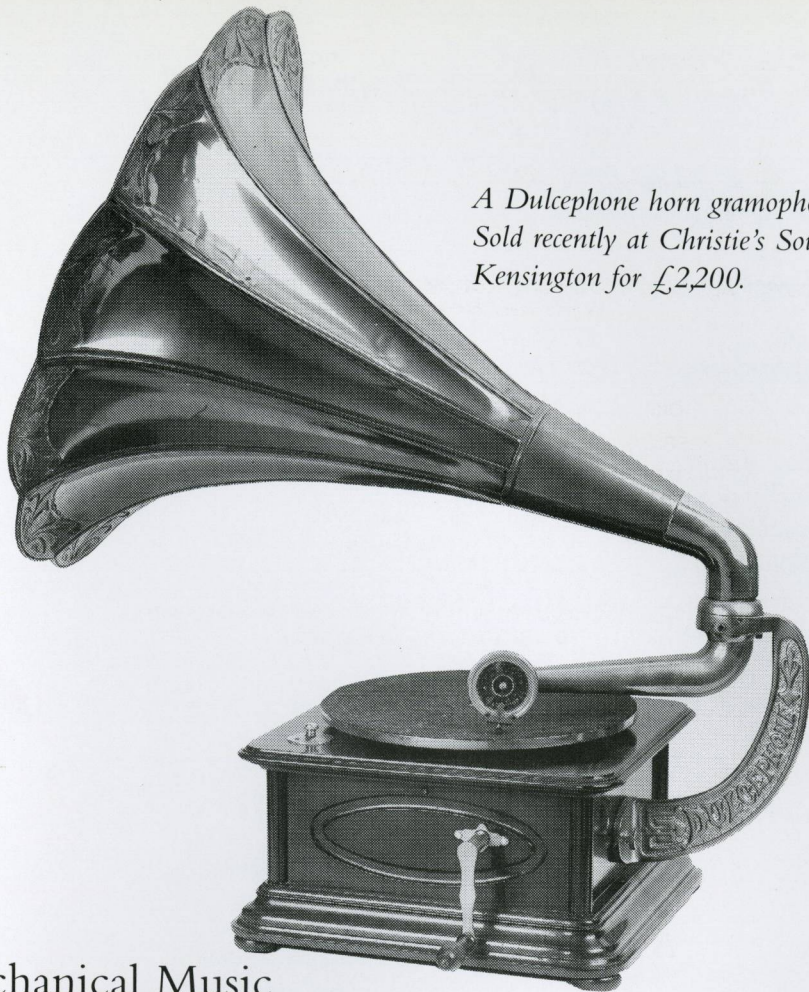
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